City Planning as Utopian Ideology and City Government Function

Research and Working Paper No. 10

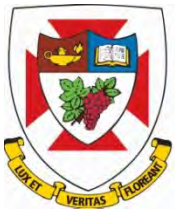
---

by Earl A. Levin

1984

The Institute of Urban Studies

INSTITUTE OF URBAN STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF WINNIPEG



THE UNIVERSITY OF WINNIPEG

FOR INFORMATION:

The Institute of Urban Studies
The University of Winnipeg
599 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg
phone: 204.982.1140
fax: 204.943.4695
general email: ius@uwinnipeg.ca

Mailing Address:
The Institute of Urban Studies
The University of Winnipeg
515 Portage Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3B 2E9

CITY PLANNING AS UTOPIAN IDEOLOGY AND CITY GOVERNMENT FUNCTION
Research and Working Paper No. 10
Published 1984 by the Institute of Urban Studies, University of Winnipeg

Note: The cover page and this information page are new replacements, 2015.

The Institute of Urban Studies is an independent research arm of the University of Winnipeg. Since 1969, the IUS has been both an academic and an applied research centre, committed to examining urban development issues in a broad, non-partisan manner. The Institute examines inner city, environmental, Aboriginal and community development issues. In addition to its ongoing involvement in research, IUS brings in visiting scholars, hosts workshops, seminars and conferences, and acts in partnership with other organizations in the community to effect positive change.

CITY PLANNING

AS UTOPIAN IDEOLOGY AND CITY GOVERNMENT FUNCTION

Research and Working Paper No. 10

by

Earl A. Levin

Institute of Urban Studies

1984

CANADIAN CATALOGUING IN PUBLICATIONS DATA

Levin, Earl.
City planning as utopian ideology and city government function

(Research and working paper; no 10)

ISBN: 0-920684-97-1

1. City planning - Addresses, essays, lectures. 2. Municipal government - Addresses, essays, lectures. 3. Winnipeg (Man.) - City planning - Addresses, essays, lectures. I. University of Winnipeg. Institute of Urban Studies. II. Title. III. Series: Research and working papers (University of Winnipeg. Institute of Urban Studies); 10.

HT166.L48 1984 352.9'6 C84-091518-7

This publication was partially supported by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, but the views expressed are the personal views of the author and the Corporation accepts no responsibility for them.

ISBN: 0-920684-97-1

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents

1. UTOPIAN IDEOLOGY IN THE EARLY TOWN PLANNING MOVEMENT IN CANADA

There are today in Canada about a dozen schools which teach "planning" in one form or another. They vary in important ways in what they teach, and what they mean by "planning." At the University of Manitoba, for example, the planning school is the Department of City Planning, which is located in the Faculty of Architecture; at York University it is the Program in Urban and Regional Planning in the Faculty of Environmental Studies; at the University of British Columbia it is the School of Community and Regional Planning; at Guelph University it is the University School of Rural Planning and Development; at the University of Calgary it is the Urbanism Program in the Faculty of Environmental Design; at Queen's University it is the School of Urban and Regional Planning; and at the University of Toronto it is the Master's Program in Planning in the Department of Geography.

These examples are enough to indicate the broad range of interests and the variety of approaches which are taken by Canadian schools in the teaching of "planning." Some are graduate schools; some are undergraduate schools; some concentrate on "regional" planning; some focus on resource-use and environmental planning; some are mainly concerned about rural land-use planning; some see planning as a "rational," or "systems," or "technical," process; some see it as a "political" process; some see it as a "design" discipline; some see it as a "policy" advisory discipline; and so on. There is, in fact, no strong concensus on the nature and role of the planning function, and it is not, therefore, a unitary or cohesive profession in the sense that Law or Medicine can be so described. This lack of a clear identity is of course the reason for the variety of academic programs and academic contexts within which "planning" is taught. It is also

the source of the considerable ambiguity and confusion in the mind of the general public, as well as that of academe, and even among "planners" themselves, about the meaning of the word "planning."

If there is any common theme at all which runs through this congeries of diverse planning programs, it is the notion that it is possible in each of the respective areas of interest, to set goals for future development and to formulate plans, which if followed, will lead to the achievement of those goals. Making plans today to achieve certain desired ends tomorrow has of course always been a commonplace activity in everyday life. But the notion that this activity can have practical and systematic application in the affairs of a city or of the countryside is a relatively recent one in Canada. Some of the earliest formal expressions of this idea in Canada can be found in the publications of the Committee of Conservation, which was established by the federal government in 1909. An integral and important part of this idea, in these earliest formulations was the notion that "planning" had the power to save society, both in its urban and rural manifestations, and in both its physical and moral aspects, from the forces of evil with which society is in unremitting struggle.

An eloquent expression of this view can be found in the address of welcome delivered in Toronto in May, 1914, by Sir Clifford Sifton, Chairman of the Commission of Conservation, which on that occasion was acting as host to the National Conference on City Planning:

> ...What I desire to say to you in closing is that the problem you are engaged upon is, in my judgment one of the two or three great problems in the world today. It is more important than flying machines, or wireless telegraphy, or battleships, or armies. It has to do with the health and happiness of the average citizen, with the abolition of wretchedness and unhappiness. The solution of it will bring health and happiness to increasing thousands of our fellow-men.[1]

---

[1] Commission of Conservation. *Sixth Annual Report.* Appendix I. (Ottawa, 1915), 286 ff.

Much the same sentiments were expressed by Mr. G. Frank Beer, President of the Toronto Housing Company, in a speech to the preceding annual meeting of the Commission of Conservation:

> As cities grow they naturally encroach upon the territory surrounding them. The result is a divergence of interests which works to the disadvantage of both city and country. ... Machinery to adjust all such differences and co-ordinate the natural development of town and country is the main object of what, for want of a better name, we call city planning. The subject really has a much wider application than is implied in its name. The interests of town and country are alike involved....I have urged chiefly the economic value of city planning; it is a very great factor, but health, morals, beauty and all that make life really worth living, lie at its very heart. This is work not for the few, but for all. Through it, a standard of living may be established which will demonstrate our moral right to the ownership of Canada.[2]

Examples of a similar fervor, of an almost evangelical faith in the capacity of planning to save society, both physically and morally , can be multiplied, but these two sets of quotations perhaps are sufficient to convey the feeling about planning which generally prevailed among its enthusiasts in the early years of this century.

This utopian view of planning as an instrument to improve the human condition had at its foundation, the notion that planning is a science, and that the salvation of the world lay in the rational application of scientific principles to the solution of society's problems. Sir Clifford Sifton, in his welcoming address to the National Conference on City Planning already referred to above, expressed the position in these terms:

---

[2] Commission of Conservation. *Fifth Annual Report.* (Ottawa, 1914), 112.

> It seems a terrible indictment of modern civilization, but it is undoubtedly a true one, that the growth of unsanitary, unhealthful conditions, the growth of slums and slum populations are in direct ratio to what we call progress. The immense growth of the city is invariably accompanied by these undesirable conditions. Why is it? If you solve this question you solve the most important social question of the modern world.
> ...As to the question which I have propounded - what is it that causes these miseries and masses of unhappiness which we all deplore - there is in my mind no doubt that it is impossible to give any single answer to the question. No one theory explains the fact. It is a composite problem and it requires a composite answer. But in part, and a most important part, of the answer is to be found in a *rational system of Town Planning, a rational system of supervising the conditions in which the people in our great cities shall live....* [3]

In reporting back to the sixth annual meeting of the Commission of Conservation concerning the National City Planning Conference which they had hosted the previous May, Sir Clifford stated that "The convention was in every respect a pronounced success, and undoubtedly helped create in the public mind a better understanding of the questions involved in what may be described as *the science of town planning.*"[4]

The conviction that town planning is a science was carried forward beyond the period of the Commission of Conservation into the era when Town Planning assumed the aspect of a "profession" under the aegis of the Town Planning Institute of Canada, which was founded in 1919. The lead editorial in the Preliminary Number of the *Journal of the Town Planning Institute,* published in June 1920, said:

---

[3] Commission of Conservation. *Sixth Annual Report,* italics added.

[4] *Ibid.,* italics added.

"The Town Planning Institute of Canada was formed a little more than a year ago with the object of advancing the scientific study and practice of town planning in Canada...."[5] A subsequent editorial in the same journal Vol.I. No.3, Oct. 1920, gave the following opinions:

> Object of Town Planning.
> It is the business of town planning to demonstrate that the current system of town growth is technically and sociologically at variance with scientific method and to prove that for the uses of life it is wasteful, enormously expensive, inefficient, and destructive of human energy and human happiness....
>
> Town Planning is a Science
> In this matter, as in all others, knowledge and art - and action based on these possessions - constitute the foundation of social progress. The most important first step in creating a sound town planning policy in Canada, therefore, is to develop the science of town planning. In so far as science is ordered knowledge, as Herbert Spencer contended, we are still in the embryonic stage of development. For the future accumulation of knowledge, gradually enabling us to build up the elements of something as nearly approaching an exact science as is possible with a subject so elastic, we must look to the universities rather than to government departments or individuals....[6]

Looking back across the intervening decades, one is struck by two things. The first is that the bright expectation of society's salvation through city planning was never realized, indeed could not have been realized, because it was based on a utopian ideology. The second is that the same ideological view of city planning persists to this day, and interestingly, is perpetuated most committedly by the universities, almost as though in fulfillment of that apocryphal statement in the *Town Planning Journal* editorial of October 1920. However, the same editorial's claim, that town planning is a science, has also not been vindicated, nor indeed could it have been, because time has demonstrated that town planning is, if anything, much closer to being an art - the art of the possible - than it is to being a

---

5 Editorial, *Journal of the Town Planning Institute* I (June 1920).

6 Editorial, *Journal of the Town Planning Institute* I (October 1920).

science. Much of today's ambiguity and confusion about city planning derives from the void that lies between the notion of planning as a utopian ideology, and planning as a function of city government.

It is important to note in the editorial of October 1920 (quoted above) the differentiation drawn between the university and government (including, one presumes, city government) as the proper milieu for arriving at an understanding of city planning - "... *we must look to the universities rather than to government departments or individuals*...."[7] The universities have in fact evolved as the major, if not indeed the only resource for the accumulation of knowledge about, and the teaching of, city planning. What made such an evolution inevitable is the general assumption that city planning is a science, that its substantive principles comprise a coherent body of theory, and that its proper work is the application of that theory to the pursuit of utopian goals for the improvement of man's physical and moral well being.

2. IDEOLOGY IN THE CONTEMPORARY CITY PLANNING CLASSROOM

This (of course) is still the position of the universities where city planning is taught. And understandably so, because the university is the ancient and proper home for theories, ideologies and musings about the human condition. There are other places too where such thoughts may be appropriately pursued: a church pulpit for example, the library or the study of a philosopher or a writer, perhaps an astronomical observatory or a scientific laboratory, and even in the mind of a thoughtful ordinary citizen. There are also many places where such intellectual and introspective pursuits are quite out of place and play little if any part in daily activities. The council

---

7 Editorial, *Journal of the Town Planning Institute* I (October 1920).

chamber of the city government must rank very high in the list of unlikely places.

The difference between the council chamber of the city government and the classroom in city planning, as the environment within which city planning is to be understood, is greater than simply the difference between city planning theory and city planning practice. It is not the same thing as the difference between, say, structural design as it is taught in the engineering classroom and the design of a structure as it is applied on a construction project where typical theoretical principles and procedures must be adapted to actual and often atypical conditions. It is not simply a matter of accomodating the generally valid law to the eccentricity of the specific situation. It is a conceptual difference; a difference which lies in the two quite different ways of perceiving the subject matter with which each deals. The city council sees the material on its agenda in terms of hard political choices and unyielding financial constraints. The world of ideas and philosophical systems, and abstract logical constructs is not the context within which their debate is conducted and their decisions are made. In the city planning classroom, the substance of city planning is seen in terms of abstract ideas and ideological systems. The world of political expediency and budgetary limits, and the short-term horizon and *ad hoc* responsiveness within which the process of municipal government is conducted - indeed *must* be conducted - is not the context within which city planning theory is taught. City planning theory is taught as a discreet ideology, indeed as a utopian ideology whose basic faith is still the same as was that of its early enthusiasts at the turn of the century who believed that town planning through the rational application of scientific knowledge, and with the motivation of high moral principles could achieve unlimited improvement not only of our towns and cities, but also of our rural countryside, and in fact, of our entire society.

It is of course possible to discuss and theorize about city planning simply as a system of ideas. The ideas which comprise such a system need not necessarily have any reference to practical reality, or, for that matter, to any aspect of objective reality. Ideas have their own reality and can exist in their own ideological world. The world's mythologies and cosmogenies, since man first began to speculate about such things, are ample evidence of this quality of the human mind. John Milton expressed it with poetic nicety in his felicitous phrase "The mind is its own place, and in itself can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven."[8]

As a utopian ideological system, city planning is seen as having an identity apart from city government. It is a view which is found not merely among the uninitiated lay public but also among those who earn their living as planners, and very commonly among academics and research workers in the field of urban affairs, and particularly in the planning programs taught in our planning schools. It is not uncommon to encounter the view that city planning exists outside of the context of city government, or has only a circumstantial relationship with city government, arising simply out of the circumstance that the city is the appropriate location for a city planning movement. This view holds that city planning has its real and proper being in the realm of social ideology or reform, and that its true goals lie in the improvement of the human condition; that it pursues its separate goals apart from those of the city government and shares those goals with city government only insofar as those of the city government accord with its own; that it has its own morality and code of ethics over and above those which prevail in the community and the civic government; and that the "city planner," as part of "city planning" also stands in this same remote relationship

---

[8] John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Book 1, lines 254-255.

to city government.

Most academic planning theory is still based on the view of planning as an ideology. That is why academic planning theory is so frequently indistinguishable from sociological theory or moral philosophy. That is why words like rationality, justice, and equity recur so frequently in the theories of planning, and why the betterment of the human condition is postulated as the goal of city planning. It is this view of city planning as a utopian ideology, which led its early advocates to attribute to it goals and powers which in fact lay beyond the goals and powers of city governments, and which underlies the contemporary confusion and disillusionment particularly among theorists and academic critics, over the failure of city planning to realize their high expectations.

3. CITY PLANNING IS CITY GOVERNMENT: THE KIND OF CITY PLANNING YOU GET DEPENDS ON THE KIND OF CITY GOVERNMENT YOU'VE GOT

It is the intent of this paper to indicate a different view of city planning - a view which is based on a simple premise: that city planning is essentially the same thing as city government, and the kind of city planning you get is largely a matter of the kind of city government you've got.

This is a radically different point of view from most planning theory which is based on utopian ideology. From the utopian viewpoint, city planning and the city planner are seen as belonging to the city planning movement or ideology rather than to the city of which

they are an integral part and whose purposes they serve. It is a view most comfortably held where utopian ideology has been transmuted into political ideology, or where planning is taught as moral philosophy or sociological theory. This is not to suggest that city planning as an ideology has no place in the context of other ideologies or theories. On the contrary, city planning as an ideology belongs in the context of other ideologies - political, philosophical, sociological, or whatever, and can find a comfortable place among them. But, as a utopian ideology it is irrelevant to the city government function. The city planning function - (let me say) the municipal planning function - has been performed by municipal governments since municipalities were first created in Canada and have done so outside of the context of utopian ideology, and independently of planning theory. The business of city government is the conduct of the affairs of the city, and the way in which those civic affairs are conducted will vary from city to city, and will even vary in the same city from time to time, depending on the nature of that city and its incumbent government. And the kind of planning which that city will do will precisely mirror the kind of government which that city has. City planning cannot have any identity or meaning outside of the context of city government. It is a function of city government, and its goals and powers, indeed its very nature, are the same as those of the city government of which it is a function.

4. THE ROLE OF MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

Perhaps the best way to develop this thesis is to review the city planning and city government functions as they have evolved in Winnipeg. Winnipeg, in fact, is as good a case study as one could desire for this purpose.

Before reviewing the Winnipeg experience,however, it is necessary

to say something about municipal government in Canada. What needs to be said is something so very elementary that one might say about it that "it goes without saying." But it is of such fundamental importance to this argument that these basic facts must be overtly stated and acknowledged.

Under our constitution there are only two levels of government - the federal and the provincial. Municipalities do not exist as statutory powers in their own right under the constitution. Instead, section 92 of the BNA Act, now patriated as our very own constitution, gives the provinces the authority to create municipalities and municipal institutions. Municipalities are then in a literal sense creatures of the provinces. One hundred and seventeen years ago there were not many municipalities - certainly not many large urban municipalities, in Canada. The population of the country was very small, and the demands for municipal services were fairly limited. Between them, the federal government and the provincial governments were able to deal with the major policy issues and the major national and regional services programs which were required. However, there were certain local services which it was deemed could be better provided by local authorities than by either the federal or provincial governments. Municipalities were one form of these local governments; they were created to provide municipal services to the local residents. These services were almost entirely related to land and property, and the municipalities were empowered to raise taxes on property in order to finance the provision of those services.

Municipal governments historically then have only the responsibility to provide municipal services. Their role is a housekeeping role. Such a role does not require a large council or a long term in office. The delivery of services can be accomplished virtually on a

day-to-day basis. It does not require ideological policies or long-range planning. This is still true for many municipalities today and was certainly true for virtually all municipalities in the years prior to 1929 when the town planning movement was at its most active, and in fact, it was true up to the end of the Second World War. Municipal councils did not have to be overly concerned about the future. Their decisions did not take long to be carried out, and the results were soon manifest. The term of office of the municipal council could be short - two years was the standard for a long time and even today it is only three years. Such a period was appropriate for councillors who were mainly farmers or small town businessmen devoting part of their time to this unpaid, or very modestly paid, public service. Fairly close contact with their constituents, however, was a requirement of the councillors, since their role was to respond to the needs of their constituents for municipal services. And it was appropriate that each councillor be elected individually, on his own merits, rather than as a member of a particular party which advocated particular policies or ran on particular political platforms.

Policy making has never been an important responsibility of municipal government simply because municipal government was created to deliver municipal services, not to make policy, and certainly not to pursue utopian ideologies, the realization of which lay beyond their statutory competence as well as outside their personal interests and their constituents' view of their role. Perhaps the clearest evidence of this is the fact that the idea of formal political parties in municipal government is widely rejected in Canada. If responsibility is limited to clearing snow, and picking up garbage, and installing sewer and water mains, and paving and repairing roads, there is no need for a party system of government. The nature of these services hardly allows for alternatives which are amenable to political persuasion. As is frequently pointed out, municipal

services are mainly services to land rather than services to people. As long as the major demands in the affairs of the city are related to property, then the city government has the competence to deal with them, and to raise taxes against property to finance those dealings. When it comes to services to people, however, the council's competence is rather different. One of the most serious anomalies in the tractarianism of the town planning movement was the fact that its ideology bore virtually no relationship to, and in fact demonstrated only the most rudimentary understanding of, the role and the competence of municipal government in Canada.

5. WINNIPEG AS A CASE STUDY: HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF GREATER WINNIPEG'S MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT AND PLANNING FUNCTION

The history of Winnipeg can be viewed as the search by the municipal governments in the Greater Winnipeg area for the most effective means of providing municipal services to their citizens, and the gradual extension of the area of centralized municipal jurisdiction to coincide with the expanding area over which unified municipal services and the correlative legislative controls became increasingly necessary. Over the span of its history to the present, Greater Winnipeg has had three different forms of government. Up until 1960, Greater Winnipeg comprised some 20 separate autonomous municipal corporations, lying physically contiguous to one another, but each of them pursuing its own independent municipal interests. This arrangement had prevailed from the beginning of municipal government in the area, and had been continuous through both the First and Second World Wars, and was only changed in 1960 with the creation of Metro - The Metropolitan Corporation of Greater Winnipeg. The metropolitan form of government continued until 1971, when the City of Winnipeg Act was passed by the provincial legislature, amalgamating all of the former municipalities of the metro regime into a single

unified city. The Act came into force on January 1st, 1972 and Winnipeg has had its present form of government since then - although there have been certain changes in the size of the council and the structure of the standing committees and the electoral constituencies during that time.

Throughout the entire period of municipal history prior to 1960, the problems of servicing the population of the Greater Winnipeg area were dealt with by the individual municipal corporations acting independently. On the whole they dealt with them adequately. However, even in the early years of the century, there were certain problems arising out of the need to provide certain services to the population, which could not be dealt with by the individual municipality acting alone and which required the joint action of two or more of them because these services necessitated the crossing of municipal boundaries. The primary concerns were the supply of water and the disposal of waste. There were also one or two other issues which arose from time to time which could only be dealt with through the joint action of two or more municipalities, and it became the practice to deal with these matters through special agencies and inter-municipal agreements. This practice continued virtually until the creation of the metro government in 1960. Among the first of these special, single purpose agencies was the Greater Winnipeg Water District, established in 1913. This was followed by the Mosquito Abatement District in 1927. Then there was the Greater Winnipeg Sanitary District created in 1935; the St.James-Winnipeg Airport Commission of 1937; the Rivers and Streams Authority No. 1 of 1940; the Metropolitan Planning Commission of 1949; the Metropolitan Defence Board of 1951; and the Greater Winnipeg Transit Commission of 1953.

As the area grew in size, the provision of services to this

expanding population, over an expanding geographical area, became increasingly difficult and complex. Municipal councils were more and more frequently forced to be concerned about the adjacent municipalities when considering their own municipal programs. They tacitly rejected the notion of an overriding area-wide authority, preferring still to be masters in their own house, and sought instead compromise devices in the form of a variety of planning commissions and committees which would give the semblance of an over-all co-ordinating mechanism, but which in effect, were largely only token in nature and which allowed the councils to continue in their established ways.

It is not necessary to provide details of these various committees and commissions. The main point which they illustrate is that there was a constant search, in the Greater Winnipeg area, for the appropriate means of providing municipal services to a growing urban population, and the persistent attempt by these municipalities to find the appropriate means without surrendering or compromising their own corporate autonomy. They were able to manage this more or less successfully up until 1960, through such devices as the Winnipeg City Planning Commission of 1911; the Greater Winnipeg Plan Committee of 1914; the Winnipeg Town Planning Commission of 1944; the Post War Reconstruction Committee created by the provincial government out of which emerged the Metropolitan Planning Committee in 1944; the Joint Executive Committee of the Winnipeg Town Planning Commission and the Metropolitan Planning Committee, also established in 1944; and the Metropolitan Planning Commission, Greater Winnipeg of 1949.

The main reason why the Greater Winnipeg municipalities were able so to manage was because the scale and urgency of the problems of urbanization had not yet reached the point where individual municipalities were overwhelmed by them, and where the municipal councils could not cope with them. All of these committees and

commissions were purely advisory in function and stood apart from the municipal government. They had no legislative or administrative powers (except of course those District authorities created by special inter-municipal agreements). None of these planning committees could deal successfully with issues of development which crossed municipal boundaries, and such issues were becoming increasingly pressing in Greater Winnipeg as post-war urbanization gained momentum.

Nor was it only the jurisdictional limit which made inter-municipal services and development programs almost impossible to carry out. There was also the very limited financial resources which each separate municipal authority could command. And beyond that there was the political jealousy and rivalry among them which was not conducive to co-operation in such undertakings except in situations of the direst urgency.

In spite of the desire and the efforts of the individual municipalities to seek solutions to development problems within their own corporate areas of competence, it was becoming increasingly clear that the simple provision of basic municipal services within the municipal corporate limits, and development control through the rudimentary municipal zoning measures then in prevailing use, were not enough to cope with the accelerating rate of urbanization in the metropolitan area. Obviously some way had to be found to provide regional services, and to manage regional growth more effectively, and in 1955 the provincial government appointed the Greater Winnipeg Investigating Commission to look into the matter, and to recommend measures for dealing with the problem. The Commission's main recommendation was that a two-tier metropolitan form of government be created for the entire Greater Winnipeg area. In 1960, the government introduced the Metropolitan Corporation of Greater Winnipeg Act which was passed into

law by the legislature, and Metro Winnipeg came into being in May of 1961.

The achievement record of Metro is outstanding in the history of municipal government in Winnipeg. This is true not only in terms of its improvements in the area's services and amenities, such as the major street system, public transportation, sewage treatment, water supply, and metropolitan parks, but also in its capacity to come to grips with issues, to address the problems and welfare of the entire metropolitan area without neglect or indifference to any of its sectors, to make decisions, to formulate and carry out policies.

Part of the success of metro in providing services must be attributed to the fact that the capacity and condition of all of the area-wide services systems had fallen so far behind the needs of the growing metropolitan population that simply bringing them up to a merely acceptable level would have represented a major achievement. But in fact Metro went beyond merely the minimum requirements. The Metro council was given area-wide authority over a broad range of services and they brought a high degree of competence, imagination, energy, and commitment to the exercise of their mandate. There are a number of other, more specific reasons for the success of Metro, but they are not directly relevant to this argument.

In terms of its more traditional planning functions, the two major plans produced by the metropolitan government were the Metropolitan Development Plan of 1969, and the Downtown Winnipeg Plan of 1970. Neither of these major plans was successful in achieving its stated goals. But this failure is not surprising, even considering the success of the other activities of the metropolitan government.

Both of these failed plans were long-range comprehensive plans, and no Canadian municipality can mount such plans successfully. Beyond that, however, both of these planning documents were not really relevant to the true planning function of Metro; they were only marginal to the central concern and responsibility of the metropolitan government, and therefore to its true planning task, which was to provide efficient and up-to-date metro wide systems of municipal services, and to manage the growth of the metropolitan area in an economic and effective manner. This they accomplished admirably.

Metro Winnipeg lasted until 1972, when it was replaced by the present unified city government. A basic reason underlying the change was the growing hostility between the area municipalities and the metropolitan government. When the NDP government came to power in 1969, relations between the metropolitan government and the area municipalities had reached such an exacerbated intensity of hostility that the new government felt constrained to take action. The action it took was to abolish the metropolitan form of government and replace it by a single municipal corporation having jurisdiction over the whole Greater Winnipeg region.

Before introducing the legislation, the NDP government spent about a year investigating the problems of local government in metropolitan Winnipeg, and formulating its ideas about the kind of government it wanted to replace Metro. In 1970 it published a White Paper, "Proposals for Urban Reorganization in the Greater Winnipeg Area," in which it set out its analysis of the situation and its proposals for the new city.

In general terms, the government perceived three main causes of the metropolitan area's difficulties: fragmented authority, segmented financial capacity, and lack of citizen involvement. It proposed to overcome these difficulties, first, through the unification of municipal government which would provide a single centralized authority and a single centralized financial capacity, and second through the creation of a system of Community Committees and Residents Advisory Groups, which, it was hoped, would provide a vehicle for effective citizen participation. The two basic principles underlying the concept of the proposed new government were centralization of the administration and decentralization of the political process.

The City of Winnipeg Act was assented to on July 27, 1971, and came into force on January 1st 1972. Since that time the city has been and continues to be organized and administered under the provisions of that Act.

6. THE UNITY OF CITY GOVERNMENT AND CITY PLANNING

This quick review of the history of municipal government in Greater Winnipeg illustrates that there is an inevitable linkage between the nature of municipal or city government, and the kind of planning it does, and in fact, the only kind of planning it is *able to do;* and the kind of planning it is able to do has nothing at all to do with planning theories derived from the notion of city planning as an ideology. The historical evolution of municipal government in Greater Winnipeg is equivalent to the historical evolution of the planning function in Greater Winnipeg: both of them grew out of and were determined by the demands placed upon them by the residents of the area for municipal services. Three phases can be

distinguished in that evolutionary process; two of them are now completed, and the third has just begun. The first phase can be described as City Planning as Basic Municipal Servicing; the second, as City Planning as Metropolitan Growth Management; and the third, can tentatively be assigned the heading of City Planning as Urban Socio-Economic Programming.

What is striking in this history is how firmly the nature and role of the planning function was in lock-step with the nature and role of the municipal government. The planning function was precisely related to the municipal governments' need and capacity for the planning function at their then prevailing levels of development activity and services programs. The kind of planning that they did was a mirror-image of the kind of government that they were.

During the first phase the pressures of development were light enough for the separate councils themselves to handle. The planning function was simply a matter of passing and administering zoning regulations and providing basic local engineering services. For this the council itself, or a committee of council, or a locally oriented commission or committee appointed by council, was sufficient. The nature of the demands of the residents made it possible for the various municipal corporations to retain their existing identity and autonomy in meeting those demands. No government, indeed no group or corporation or institution, will change its role or its form, or surrender any of its power or authority or status, unless compelled to do so. Conditions which prevailed until the end of World War II were such as to enable the separate municipal corporations to continue in their established mode while successfully discharging their municipal responsibilities. The planning function in its totality, and quite appropriately, consisted of the local engineering services

and rudimentary zoning controls. This was the type of planning which was right and sufficient for this type of government in the prevailing political and developmental circumstances. A number of planning commissions and committees were appointed during that period but they were more in the realm of ideology than in the realm of government. They were purely advisory in nature, and their influence on the decisions of the local councils was not great.

As the population expanded, however, and as the accompanying problems grew in magnitude and complexity, new solutions had to be found. The solution which emerged in 1960 was the establishment of a metropolitan form of government.

It should be noted that the decade 1950-1960 was one of the most vigorous growth periods in the history of Greater Winnipeg. During that decade the metropolitan area grew by an average of 3.4 per cent per year, which is something of a record in terms of the number of people added since the increase was on a fairly substantial population base. During that decade, too, the area was divided into a multiplicity of separate municipal corporations, whose separate powers and finances did not allow them to cope successfully with this unprecedented population expansion. As a result, the adequacy of the municipal services systems in the Greater Winnipeg area declined as the population grew. By 1960, the prevailing municipal structure could no longer cope. It had become obsolete, and it was necessary to replace it with a new structure designed specifically for the purpose of successful growth management. It was universally believed throughout this continent that the phenomenon of unrestrained growth which had been experienced since the end of the war in 1945 would simply continue on into the dim and distant future. It must be realized that few, if any, municipalities in Canada were in a position to accomodate

this growth smoothly. They lacked the proper staff with the appropriate training; they lacked the proper statutory and bylaw instruments; there was not in place a suitable municipal government structure nor the delineation of the areas of jurisdiction and competence which would ease the absorption of such a massive new population into the regime of the host metropolis. It is understandable then that during the post-war decades there was a great activity of adjustment in the realm of municipal government. New forms of city government were created, such as the metropolitan governments of Toronto and Winnipeg, and the regional governments in Ontario; new ideas were experimented with such as district planning commissions, and extra-territorial jurisdictions; new powers were enacted under provincial planning acts and municipal zoning bylaws; new government departments were created to deal with the new dimensions of urban life.

It must also be recognized that for about three decades following the end of the Second World War city government and city planning throughout Canada were completely given over to the physical development of the city. This physical development was simply a function of physical growth contingent upon the growth of the urban population and the urban and national economies. The driving force in the nation and its cities was the energy of physical and economic growth, and political decisions were moulded and directed by that force. Those political decisions and the hard facts of the economics of development are what shaped our cities during this critical period of the urbanization of Canada. Members of city councils would have been bewildered if they had been asked whether they favoured rational comprehensive planning over incremental planning, or whether they based their decisions on the principles of utilitarianism, or distributive justice, or advocacy. They would not have understood the meanings of those words, and if they had, it is probable that most of them would

not have seen any connection between them and their role as decision-makers in the city planning process. It is, perhaps, not even stretching the point too far to suggest that most city planners during that period would have had the same reactions to those questions.

Urban growth was rampant, and it was regarded as a good thing in itself. There was a universal conviction that growth stimulated the economy and attracted new investment; it increased the sum total of the city's wealth which ultimately found expression in an improved standard of living for everyone, even for the poor, whose lives are less oppressive,however marginally, during conditions of general affluence; it brought new tax revenues to the city's treasury allowing city council the politically advantageous opportunity to expand and improve municipal services, and to undertake new and popular civic projects; it built the high-rise towers recognized everywhere at that time as the symbols of civic success; it heightened the vitality of the city - "the action" was the phrase commonly used - and generated the sense of excitement and sophistication, and the daringly new and experimental life-styles, all of which had become synonymous with the modern, innovative and progressive metropolis.

With this perception of the virtues of growth, and with the normalcy of growth demonstrated and confirmed in the annual statistics of the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) and the national economic indices, city councillors sat in the council chambers and on planning committees quite unaware of planning theory and oblivious to questions of planning ideology. Development issues were decided mainly on the basis of political and economic considerations. But the principle of growth and development as the ultimate civic good underlay all council's deliberations, and they did whatever they could

in their decisions and bylaws, not only to accomodate that growth, but to attract it. This growth psychology was not merely a big-city phenomenon. It permeated every aspect of our national life. The annual increase in the gross national product was watched with the same fascination and satisfaction as the annual percentage rise in the city population, the number of building cranes on the skyline and the annual value of building permits issued. Everyone was convinced that there was no limit to the growth, and that this was just as it should be.

Under these conditions, it is understandable that the major role of city government and city planning came to be regarded as "growth management." The outstanding accomplishment of Winnipeg's metropolitan government was its successful growth management programs which took the form of the provision of a first-class network of services on a metropolitan scale, from sewage treatment to regional parks, from the major streets to the transit system. This was in fact also their major planning accomplishment. Their comprehensive long-range metropolitan development plan was a failure, and their Downtown Winnipeg Plan was only partially, and on a very modest scale, successful. The first reason for these failures is because municipal government generally cannot implement such plans; but the Downtown Winnipeg Plan failed for two other more specific reasons. One was because the public sector cost component of the plan could not be seriously undertaken by the metropolitan council. The metropolitan council's finances were in large measure raised by an impost on the area municipalities. The area municipalities would undoubtedly have been able to successfully resist the increase in their contribution which would have been required. Moreover, it is doubtful whether the metro council itself would have seriously considered spending the necessary money on this plan which was not really central to their capital program. One must also recognize the probability that the plan would not have been able to attract

the necessary private investment. The second reason is that two short years after the publication of the plan, metro was dissolved, and the new unified council turned away from the downtown to direct its attention to the suburbs.

In retrospect then, the decade of metro emerges as one in which the growth management of the burgeoning metropolis was the major task of the newly created metropolitan government, as well as of its planning function, which it carried out with eminent success.

7. "FAILURE" OF PLANNING AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN THE UNIFIED CITY

Metro lasted until 1972 when it was replaced by the unified City of Winnipeg. The reasons for the change have been touched upon, as well as the two most frequent charges levied against it, both of which are squarely in the area of our specific interest here. These criticisms are directed against the unified city's failure to make any plans, and the failure of the Residents Advisory Groups.

In order to gain some insight into these failures, one must go back to the time when the Bill for the unification of the city was being prepared. There was a division of opinion within the Schreyer cabinet, not just on the manner in which to proceed with unification, but even, to a considerable degree, on the question of whether to proceed at all. Diffidence toward full unification was felt mainly by those members of the NDP government who had formerly been the mayor or a member of the council of an area municipality, and who felt that their re-election as an MLA would be jeopardized

if the government proceeded with amalgamation resulting in the termination of these historic municipalities, and their view was shared by numerous other government members. Their concerns were, of course, seriously considered in the discussions of the amalgamation proposals, and one of the results which emerged was the principle of a gradual transition to full, centralized unification, with the retention of as many characteristics of the former area municipality organization as possible.

One such provision was that the former boundaries of the municipalities would be retained as the boundaries of the new communities. Another was that the names of the former municipalities would be retained where ever possible as the names of the new communities. Another was that the new communities would be divided into electoral wards of about 10,000 people each, and each ward would elect one representative to the new council. This meant that the members of the new unified council would be elected from the old municipal areas, and ensured that, initially at any rate, there would be a large number of former suburban municipal councillors on the city council of the new amalgamated city. Still another provision was that the councillors from the wards of each community would constitute a "community committee" and would supervise the administration in the delivery of services. It was soon discovered that this latter provision was very ambiguous, and, in fact, could not be implemented in its literal meaning, and it was amended shortly after the unified city started to function.

The resident's advisory groups were intended as the citizens' counterpart to the community committees. It was expected that this system of citizens organizations would assist the community committees in the forming of policy and would bring the ordinary citizen closer to the centre of decision-making and allow him to participate more

fully in the process of government.

It must be remembered that at this time much of the ferment of ideas and emotions generated by the protest against the Vietnam War and the counter-culture revolt had already spread across the international boundary into Canada. Its influence can clearly be seen at work in the ideas that were introduced by the government's consultants on the reorganization proposal, and in the language of their memoranda and study documents, and even of the White Paper, out of which the Act was fashioned.

It can be argued that a significant part of the Act was really out of context in the Winnipeg situation, and represented a displacement of perception from the conditions in the urban cores of American metropolises, and even in Third World countries, to Winnipeg, on the basis of ideological preconceptions. Whether this argument could be successfully defended is a moot point. What is incontrovertible however is that the residents advisory groups were a failure, and that the council also failed to produce any city plans pursuant to Part XX of the Act.

The author's view of these failures is that they were inevitable, and could not have been otherwise, given the political structure of the new city, and the economic circumstances in which it found itself as it moved through the decade of the seventies and into the eighties. It was virtually impossible for the city council, made up as it was of an overwhelming majority of suburban representatives, whose only allegiance was to a suburban constituency of some 10,000 people, to be concerned about planning for the city as a whole, and even more impossible for them to be concerned about the central area of the city. Their personal political survival was

owed to the electors in their ward, and it was of no advantage to them to pursue or espouse major issues which lay outside their own ward, or which might present a threat to their own ward in terms of taxes, or physical intrusions, or the loss or deferral of some local recreational or other amenity. This is perhaps the clearest illustration of the point that city planning and city government are different aspects of the same function, and the kind of planning you get is really a matter of the kind of city you've got. After 1972 Winnipeg was the kind of city in which the idea of comprehensive planning, or of central area planning was meaningless.

But it was not only the political structure which made such planning meaningless. The city's economy was perhaps an even greater factor. During the decade of the fifties, Greater Winnipeg's growth rate was quite respectable at an average of 3.4% per year, and its economy was quite vigorous. The city's growth rate declined steadily from that high. During the sixties it averaged 1.35% per year; and during the seventies it averaged 0.8% per year, and only 0.5% per year for the last half of the decade. The city's economy and its development activity declined commensurately with the drop in the population growth rate.

There is very little need or incentive for growth management in a city which is not growing. During the fifties, city planning was concerned with the accomodation of new growth by means of a municipal structure which was rapidly becoming obsolete. The Metropolitan Corporation of Greater Winnipeg Act provided a new municipal structure which could effectively make up the shortfall in regional services which had been accumulating, and could effectively manage the growth which the metropolitan area was still experiencing albeit at a declining rate. By the time the City of Winnipeg Act was passed in 1972, the city had come to a virtual standstill. The

need for planning - which during the preceding decade was the need for growth management - became a secondary concern. And the need for resident's advisory groups to advise the community committees on planning matters was non-existent. The idea of the resident's advisory groups under the Act was conceived as a device to allow the ordinary citizen the opportunity to participate in development decisions. In fact, however, by 1972 there was very little development and very little for the ordinary citizen to participate in. Given the political structure of the unified city, and the coincident stagnation in the growth rate, it was inevitable that there would be no interest, or even ability on the part of the council to engage in planning exercises for the city, and no basis for activity by the resident's advisory groups. In these terms neither the "planning" of the city, nor the Resident's Advisory Groups can properly be described as a "failure."

Earlier in this paper there was a suggestion that Winnipeg has entered a new phase in the government and the planning of the city, which was given the tentative name of City Planning as Urban Socio-Economic Programming. This arises out of the fact that the federal and provincial governments have been the major planning and development authorities in Winnipeg for some time now - actually since 1980 or '81. The Core Area Initiative and the North Portage Development Corporation are the evidence of this fact.

The circumstances under which the senior levels of government can become the dominant presence in the city are circumstances in which the local urban dynamic slows down, and there is not enough energy to maintain the city council at a high level of activity and therefore at a high level of presence and prestige. Development is the fuel which feeds the city dynamo. If there is little or no development, the activity and prestige of the city council must

decline. Under these conditions social and economic issues become the dominant issues in government, and these issues are mainly under the jurisdiction of the senior governments. Accordingly, *they* become the high-profile presence in the civic scene, and ultimately they become involved beyond merely social and economic programs, and in programs of physical development, redevelopment, revitalization and city planning in general, which are properly the responsibility of the civic government.

This is what is happening in Winnipeg. The planning which the city is now getting is precisely appropriate to a city whose population and economy are in a state of near equilibrium - that is to say the planning of the city is not at the initiative of the city, but mainly at the initiative of the senior governments. There is therefore, a heavy weighting on the side of economic and social programs. If the condition of near-stagnation continues, the senior governments, through various tri-level programs will probably continue to determine the city's planning and development. And the substratum of these interventions will be short-term social and economic programs. Under this circumstance a new relationship must be established between the city and the other two levels of government which will be based on the recognition of this condition.

CONCLUSION

If the argument developed in this paper is valid, the implications for the teaching of city planning, and particularly of planning theory in the urban context, are profound. Those implications cannot be pursued here in detail; that would require a study in itself. But a couple of inferences may not be too difficult to draw with respect to the curricula of planning schools. One is that courses in

planning theory should recognize and acknowledge the difference between planning as ideology and planning as government function, and much more material should be introduced into these "theory" courses on the way in which the planning function and the government function have evolved over time in the various cities of Canada. The second is that there should be some specified period of practical experience required as part of the planning school's program. This working experience could take various forms, which again cannot be explored in detail here. One suggestion, however, is that instead of preparing a "thesis" as a final requirement, the student might enter into an"internship" in a planning office either in the public or private sector where he would be assigned an actual project on which that office is currently engaged, and which the student would be expected to complete or to prepare a comprehensive report on after a specified period of time, during which he would have "hands on" contact with all of the issues and the persons involved in the situation.

If the argument developed in this paper is valid then the implications are also profound for the understanding of what city planning is all about, and, by extension, for the practice of city planning. The salient points of the argument are:

1. City planning theory as an ideology lies in the realm of sociological or political ideology or philosophy; it has little if any relevance for city planning as a function of city government.

2. The objective of city planning is not ideological except to the extent to which the objective of city government is ideological.

The objective of city government is fundamentally to fulfill the responsibilities and obligations placed upon it by the statutes under which it exists and functions. The objective of the city councillors is to carry out those responsibilities and obligations at a nice balance between the least cost to the taxpayer and the greatest political advantage to themselves.

3. The senior levels of government have been from the outset, and continue to be, much more the appropriate levels of government than the municipal, for pursuing the goals of social betterment expressed in the ideology of the planning movement. Indeed, the city has been from the beginning, and continues to be, quite hopelessly inappropriate for such a role. The linkage of the ideal of social betterment with the instrumentality of town planning as was conceived by the town planning visionaries of the period 1909-1929 was a mistaken perception arising out of a misreading of the nature of city government, perhaps because of an understandable but misdirected enthusiasm for a gripping idea in a period when the nation had not yet become urbanized, and cities were still small and rural in ethos, and the character of their ultimate maturity was still not perceptible. It was also a regrettable historical error because it has not only misdirected the thrust for social reform, but has brought great confusion into the sphere of city planning, from which we still suffer.

4. If city planning were to be enabled to pursue the ideals of the town planning movement, its very nature would have to be changed to allow it to do so. It would have to become much more like the senior governments in its capacity to make policy, in its financial resources, its legal powers, its autonomy, its accountability to its citizens. The city as we have it today

can no more behave as the utopian idealists would have it behave, than a donkey can behave like a racehorse. That kind of behaviour is simply not within the realm of the inner nature of either.

5. It is too much to expect the province to change the nature of the city, but that is what would be required. And only the province has the power to do it. But even if we can't hope for such radical legislation, perhaps it is possible to work out a new relationship between the province and the city which would make it possible for them jointly to pursue the ideals of social betterment through city planning.

6. At the present time, city planning varies from city to city to the extent that city government varies from city to city. There is, in fact, no integrating or unifying ideology which binds the planning function together as an independent, cohesive activity or continuum from city to city and which overrides or stands above the great differences in the city government from city to city. In order to understand city planning it is therefore necessary to understand city government. And in order to understand the planning function in any given city it is necessary to understand that city - its government, its social structure, its economy, its history, its culture, its leaders. That is why one of the most foolish and dangerous assumptions in city planning is that because a technique or a device, or a measure works successfully in one city it will also work successfully in another. That is also why it is virtually impossible, if not indeed entirely impossible, to formulate a general theory of city planning except as a utopian ideology or as part of some larger, encompassing ideology or theory, which as already stated has little or no relevance for city planning as a function of city government.

7. In the light of the foregoing, Planning Theory courses should be completely revised. There should be a drastic reduction in the theory of planning as ideology, and a corresponding increase in the teaching of the city planning function as a mirror of the function of city government.

The central theme of the argument developed in this paper is the unity of the city government function and the city planning function. If the argument is true then city planning cannot be something other than, or something in conflict with city government. And if there is a failure, whether moral or functional, in urban society, as the early town planning advocates believed, that failure cannot be corrected through the application of urban planning theories, as contemporary planning theorists still believe; it can only be corrected through the appropriate changes in urban government. Such changes, in one direction, go to the heart of our tri-level system of government and to the nature of our urban society at large, and in another direction must address the unique identity and personality of each individual urban place.